

Pollinator Prairie Restoration



Katharine Atkinson
 Biology & Environment
 Prince of Peace Catholic School
 Maquoketa Wildlife Unit, DNR

<p>Part I: General Overview of Business</p> <p>The Wildlife Units of the DNR manage and restore habitats, to maintain diverse wild plant and animal populations, to support natural areas and hunting.</p>	<p>Part II: Job Specifics</p> <p>The Maquoketa Unit oversees DNR properties in 6 eastern Iowa counties, including forests, open fields, and wetlands that sustain wild deer, geese, ducks, doves, fish and the myriad of plants, animals & insects they feed upon.</p>
<p>Part III: Introduce the Problem</p> <p>An open field acre at the “Syracuse Wildlife Area” in Calamus needs to be cleared of an old house and barn, and returned to wildlife habitat use. The site is dry, sandy soil adjacent to a 10 acre open prairie and 700 acres wooded land that includes corn-growing areas that supply feed for wildlife.</p> <p>The problems are clearing the site of invasive plants, preparing the site for planting, and monitoring the sustained growth of plants over several years.</p>	<p>Part IV: Background</p> <p>The Syracuse site would be an ideal location for two habitat restorations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A snake hibernaculum, made by filling cellar of the old house with large blocks, and capping it. Rare snakes, found only in the Wapsipinicon watershed would benefit. Local farms and golf course would benefit from rodent-control. • Pollinator Prairie planting of the cleared acre would provide habitat for pollinator insects, in addition to trees already on site that pollinators like. Insects would feed small animals that snakes like to eat.
<p>Part V: Business Solution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DNR Wildlife Unit will use on-site materials to convert the house cellar into a snake habitat. • Funding and follow-up monitoring of the Pollinator Prairie portion are needed. A proposal has been developed for support from a Trees Forever call for pollinator site development. Students can help with monitoring plant and insect populations at the site, over the next several years. 	<p>Part VI: Student Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can develop a site-specific picture guide that will help them identify the plants seeded at the Syracuse Pollinator Prairie. Students can also identify invasive plants to continue eradicating. • Students can prepare a picture guide to pollinators and snakes that are expected in the area, to aid them in monitoring. • Students can work with the school’s bee-keeper teacher, to determine if the site becomes good for bees, and if the honey made is good.